Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The next issue of Liberty will appear on or about November 15, and it is the intention that future issues shall appear on the fifteenth day of the month. See announcement on second page regarding the change in price and frequency of issue.

"You lie, villain!" said Dana the other day to an editor who had made a certain statement about the ownership of the "Sun." I thank him for the expression; it enables me to fitly characterize the following definition he recently gave of the term Anarchist: "One who believes in knocking everything into confusion, with dynamite or anything else, with the hope of getting more than his share in the scramble. A quick and complete form of repudiation." You lie, villain! You cannot have forgotten your own articles on Proudhon.

About a fortnight before the Maine election the New York "World," in an editorial headed "Three Predictions," prophesied that the Republicans would carry the State by an increased majority; that, as a result, Sewall would withdraw from the Democratic ticket; and that he would be replaced by Watson. Boasting of its previous successes as a prophet, the "World" added that it staked its entire prophetic reputation on the correctness of this forecast. Well, the Republicans got the increased majority (which *everybody* foresaw), but Sewall, instead of climbing down, has definitely accepted the Democratic nomination, and of the two, Sewall and Watson, the latter seems much the more likely to retire from the race. Therefore the "World" has lost its entire prophetic reputation. Unfortunately so slight a loss will not drive it into bankruptcy.

The Springfield "Republican" reprints without comment the editorial of the Washington "Post" entitled "Is Mr. Dana an Anarchist?" Dana does not like the "Republican," and ordinarily improves every opportunity to heap ridicule and abuse upon it. The head and front of the "Republican's" offending is its sympathy with the oppressed and fair treatment of the anti-plutocratic movement. If there is one thing Dana cannot forgive, it is a friendly attitude toward social reform. Now, however, when the "Republican" has the audacity to intimate that Dana himself may be an Anarchist at heart, the old renegade is condemned to silence. He cannot pick up the gauntlet; he must swallow the affront. How galling the situation must be to him! How great his fury and rage!

At last Godkin has discovered a simple test or touchstone for the "honest voter" who cannot understand the intricacies of the financial question and who sincerely desires to do what is right. The reader will remember that Godkin has reversed himself again and again on the question whether the experts or the people at large are the more competent judges of what a sound and safe currency is, and that his latest decision was to the effect that, if it were not for mischievous professors and quibbling economists, the people would stick to the gold standard. His confidence in the people must have received a severe shock, in spite of the crushing failure of Bryan which he and the other truthful New York editors have been so loudly (though not without an undertone of effort) proclaiming. He is not so sure that the people would choose the gold standard, and feels the need of a simplification of the problem. At the end of a column-and-a-half editorial on the "main question," we find this great discovery: "The common sense that has come to prevail concerning eternal salvation may properly be called on to display itself in the solution of our financial problems. Instead of puzzling over ratios and values and appreciation and depreciation, let people ask themselves and ask others which side in the present contest stands more clearly for national honor and good faith, and for honest and just dealing between man and man? There is plenty of sophistry to be heard on both sides, we admit; but with this simple touchstone the voter who sincerely desires to do what is right will not find it difficult to select the true course." It is scarcely necessary to point out the lameness, impotence, and puerility of this conclusion. It would disgrace a schoolboy. The "simple question" evolved by Godkin is exactly the question which requires an exhaustive study of "ratios and values and appreciation and depreciation," for it is in the light of these difficult subjects that one can decide whether Godkin or Bryan stands for honest dealing and good faith. Does Godkin imagine that his pharisaical claims and pretensions of virtue and honesty are on a par with demonstrated facts? Does he expect his cant about "sound money" and "honor" to be accepted without a heavy discount? Unfortunately for his cause, his credit has entirely vanished. Even without his admission, most people are aware that he talks "plenty of sophistry." But sophistry is his only refuge; if he really relies on the general faith in his disinterestedness and purity, he is lost.

Dr. Eugene Schmitt, of Budapest, who some years since took the prize of the Berlin Academy for his work on the "Secrets of the Hegelian Dialectic," has just resigned his post in the Hungarian department of justice under peculiar circumstances. His philosophical investigations have brought him to the Tolstoian conclusion that government by force is inconsistent with Christian love, and he has for some time edited a magazine setting forth these views. The minister of justice requested him, as an office-holder, to refrain from publication of such views. To this Dr. Schmitt has replied by an open letter, under date of September 10, 1896, in which he throws up his office, declaring that he finds it "inconsistent with his honor to serve under an institution which represents the legal oppression and exploitation of mankind, and whose system of violence and slavery, founded on blood and iron, is in radical contradiction with the noble principle of Christian love and with the demands of man's conscience." It seems probable that no action will be taken by the government in the premises. On two occasions, when his writings have been judicially attacked in Prussia, Dr. Schmitt has offered to deliver himself up to the German authorities, but his offer was not accepted.

Still another journal has adopted the new typography, making, in all, six that now regularly use it, whereas there was not one in 1894, when Liberty introduced it. This is a better record than any type-setting machine can point to within so brief a period. The latest accession comes from England. It is "Natural Food," a sixteen-page monthly devoted to hygiene, published by Drs. Emmet and Helen Densmore and edited by Arthur Wastall. In its October issue the type is set without "justification." Curiously, in his announcement of the change, the editor gives the chief credit to the "International Art Printer," never mentioning Liberty, although every person well informed upon this matter knows that the "International Art Printer" was led to adopt the new method through the advocacy of it by the editor of Liberty in signed and unsigned articles contributed by him to various journals. I might suppose the editor of "Natural Food" to be ignorant of this, were it not that I know him to be familiar with "Lucifer" and other American organs of advanced opinion, that his columns contain an advertisement of the "Age of Thought" (which uses the new typography), and that at least once, if not twice, I have mailed him a copy of Liberty. The weak things of this earth may succeed in confounding the mighty, but theirs will never be the glory, if Mr. Wastall can help it.

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Announcement.

Until a few years ago Liberty's annual deficit was met out of the editor's earnings in another capacity, with the aid of the casual contributions offered from time to time by generous friends. But there came a time when it was no longer possible for the editor to meet this deficit, he having incurred responsibilities that regularly consumed what he was able to earn. Since then the deficit has been met by monthly payments by those supporters of the paper who were enabled by more fortunate circumstances, or prompted by intenser interest, to take part in the continuance of the Anarchistic propaganda.

For various reasons, which need not be stated here, it is now deemed best to discontinue this arrangement, and to so reduce the cost of Liberty's publication that outside aid, *while still welcomed*, will not be an absolute necessity. Hereafter, then, Liberty will be a monthly, without change from its present size and shape. By this plan the regular income from subscriptions at a reduced price will balance all necessary *money* expenditure, the main item of expense being eliminated by the fact that it will be possible for the editor to do most of the type-setting for a monthly issue.

The subscription price will be sixty cents a year; but, to avoid the labor and expense of frequent remittances in sums inconveniently small, the inducement of a two-year subscription at one dollar is offered, and will, I hope, be largely taken advantage of. At this low price, moreover, it will be easier to get new subscribers for the paper,—a work in which all the readers are earnestly solicited to take part.

Other advantages of the plan are that it will enable the editor to attend more promptly to his business correspondence, the necessary neglect of which in the past has been a serious drawback, and may also enable him to make valuable additions to the propaganda by book or pamphlet.

Looking forward to the time when it will be possible to restore the fortnightly issue, or perhaps to make the paper a weekly, the editor solicits the ardent coöperation of all libertarians in the effort to give Liberty all the power and influence possible while under the necessity of less frequent publication. T.

Mr. Shaw's Defence of Public Enterprise.

II.

"Now let us talk a little common sense," says Mr. Shaw, after talking a great deal of learned nonsense about public and private enterprise, compulsory levying of tribute by capitalists, and so on. Most willingly; but Mr. Shaw must remember that, even when talking common sense, he is bound by the rules of logical reasoning,—is a slave of logic, in other words.

Describing the present tentative efforts of English municipalities to advance the interests of art, Mr. Shaw asks us to suppose a number of things, as follows:

> Suppose they reinforce their staff of attendants and cleaners with a staff of dressers, then of stage-carpenters, finally with a staff of actors, who could occasionally give a Shaksperean performance parallel to the concerts. Suppose the money paid by the individuals who attended the performances (voluntarily) were sufficient not only to defray the expenses of the municipal theatre, but to lighten the rates of the people who never go to the theatre, aad who might perhaps return the compliment by supporting municipal chapels and churches. Suppose the municipal theatre hurt nobody; suppose it made theatrical art, now strangled by its mere business difficulties, easier; suppose it helped to turn the provincial Englishman from the fat-fed, respectably-dressed, circulating-library-stuffed, earless, eyeless, tasteless, mannerless boor he now is into a cultivated human being,—and it is on the reasonable probability of these conditions being practically attained, more or less, that I have based my advocacy of municipal activity in this direction,—what objection has Mr. Yarros to offer?

I am afraid Mr. Shaw is violating our agreement. He is not talking common sense at all. He "supposes" the very things I have questioned or denied, coolly says that he bases his advocacy on the "reasonable probability" of certain "conditions being attained" regardless of my contention that there *is* no such reasonable probability, and then innocently asks what objections I have to offer? There clearly would be no objections to offer if I granted his suppositions and admitted the "reasonable probability"; and it is because I cannot suppose things contrary to reason and fact that I have advanced my objections. I cannot suppose that municipal theatres would lighten the rates of the people; I cannot suppose that they would hurt nobody; I cannot suppose that they emancipate the drama from commercialism; I cannot suppose that they would improve the intellectual status of the English *bourgeois*. I know better; and my whole article was written to show that nothing of this sort could possibly occur. I considered the question from the general political standpoint as well as from the particular dramatic standpoint on which Mr. Shaw laid special stress. Let us see how he meets my objections.

We are struck. first of all, by a strange and significant omission in Mr. Shaw's defence. One of my most important and pivotal points, which must appeal to him, the most advanced and conscientious dramatic critic in England, with peculiar force, he carefully passes over. I asked him to tell us what reason he had for believing that municipal officials would *educate* the public by giving them artistic and wholesome plays. "Would municipalities produce Ibsen or Jones (at his best) or Sudermann?" I asked; "would not the rule of the absurd censure be even more arbitrary, 'moral,' and irritating than now?" I find no answer to these queries. Mr. Shaw can give none which would not completely demolish his scheme. He knows that the ideas of municipal rulers about the stage are not such that we may expect a progressive policy from them. Mr. Shaw intimates that they might encourage Shaksperean performances. Perhaps; but a very recent (and very fine) article of Mr. Shaw's in the "Saturday Review" leads me to believe that he is not particularly anxious to have more Shaksperean performances than the public now gets. I am not aware that Shakspere is *persona non grata* with private managers, and, if so elaborate productions as Irving's meet with but scant appreciation, I see no reason for expecting great patronage of municipal Shaksperean performances? If private managers are open to criticism, it is on the score of their cowardice and obtuseness in dealing with modern plays; and certainly common sense would laugh at Mr. Shaw if he were to hold out any promise of a more liberal and intelligent policy on the part of municipal theatres.

I might submit the case to the common-sense jury without further argument. Mr. Shaw is already defeated. The incongruity and contradiction are too plain. A lover of the drama, a progressive and competent critic who deplores the decadence of the modern stage, appealing to Philistine and narrow-minded and ignorant municipal rulers to elevate and regenerate dramatic art is indeed a spectacle for gods and men. If Clement Scott, the bitter enemy of modern dramatic tendencies, appealed to municipal rulers to save British morals from the poison of Ibsenism and realism, no one would be astonished, but Mr. Shaw in the *rôle* of humble petitioner for municipal salvation is a most puzzling and amazing phenomenon.

Still, let us follow Mr. Shaw's further alleged common-sense arguments. He does not see, he says, why municipal theatres would not be controlled by competition and kept up to the mark. Irving can start a rival house next door and entice away the public by superior performances, and the deficit thus caused could not be bluffed away. This implies that the municipal theatre would be supported by the receipts, and not from the general fund raised by compulsory taxation. If so, I have, indeed, no objection to the experiment being made. If a municipality wishes to start a theatre on purely commercial principles, there is nothing to be said against the scheme. It suggests Mr. Bliss's "Voluntary Socialism through the State," and I have cheerfully conceded that that was a wholly innocent proposal. There would, of course, be the initial difficulty of getting the means to build a suitable theatre and properly equip it; but I imagine Mr. Shaw would suggest the issue of special bonds with the understanding that principal and interest would be paid out of the profits of the theatre. As no one would be willing to advance a single shilling on such terms, Mr. Shaw's scheme would be nipped in the bud.

But Mr. Shaw, it appears, has not really

made up his mind in regard to the incidence of the theatre tax. Although he distinctly says that he does not "propose that anybody shall contribute except the people who voluntarily attend," he promptly nullifies this explicit declaration by saying in his next sentence that, if the majority of the rate-payers should choose to subsidize the theatre for its social effects, they could do so at a trifling annual cost to the people at large. Now, Mr. Shaw does not "propose" to oppose this subsidy, while I am bound to oppose it as a wholly unwarrantable attempt to support, at everybody's expense, an institution which only the majority see fit to maintain. Mr. Shaw, then, calmly contemplates a municipal theatre supported, not by the proceeds, but by compulsory taxation. How can he ask, in the name of common sense, those who are opposed to compulsory taxation to support him in this "reform"?

Moreover, he is now obliged to drop his contention that municipal theatres can be kept up to the mark by competition. The moment they are made independent of receipts and voluntary contributions, competition ceases to have any terrors for them. They are not afraid of deficits which are made good by subsidies. That, if municipal theatres were once started, they would become public charges and burdens; that, in other words, the majority would vote to subsidize them as a means of counteracting the immoral stage and disseminating sweetness and light by producing so elevating plays as "The Silver King,"—I have no doubt whatever. Mr. Shaw's proposal is simply an entering wedge.

One remark of Mr. Shaw's is utterly unintelligible to me. He states that "the theatrical manager is not an ordinary man of business following the scent of a market demand, and that no sane capitalist will put a farthing of capital into a good theatre on purely commercial grounds." Does this mean that theatres are unprofitable enterprises, and that they are run from other than pecuniary motives? Does it mean that managers are generally out of pocket and that the deficit has to be made good by a subsidy of some private backer? This is certainly not the case in the United States. Theatrical managers and actors make fortunes here by following the scent of the market, and not a single theatre is subsidized by private or public philanthropists. Still, even if private subsidies were needed to maintain our theatres, just as private subsidies are needed to maintain symphonic orchestras, I fail to see how the case for municipal theatres would be strengthened. The solid fact remains that theatres exist, and that they give the public, as a rule, just what it wants and is prepared to enjoy. Even if we admit that they do retard dramatic progress, and that they condemn the best productions of the day to obscurity and neglect, it by no means follows that we are committed to the proposition in favor of municipal theatres, since government officials are certain to be more obtuse and reactionary than private managers and their backers. These, at least, do not care for namby-pamby morality and Philistine respectability. Profit is the first consideration with them, and they will give you revolution if they see a chance to swell receipts. Officials, on the other hand, are moralists and censors first, and lovers of the drama afterward.

I confess that Mr. Shaw's defence of the "respectable public," or what Ibsen would call the "compact majority," is more incomprehensible to me than his original references to the same. He tells us that we ought to give the devil his due, and that it is necessary to recognize forces and take proper notice of the effects produced by them. Becoming specific, Mr. Shaw tells us that this Philistine majority, this respectable public, which, as Mr. Shaw has insisted in the "Saturday Review" over and over again, cannot distinguish between art and contortions, between acting and going through the prescribed motions, actually secures, through its action upon the county council, greater decency in the music halls than prevails in the lower class of theatres. Mr. Shaw appears to be desirous of extending the power of the public, and giving them control of the theatres as well. Yet he has been bitterly fighting the absurd censure which still survives in England! Does he want the censorship of the voters in place of that of an obscure clerk? Is he willing to submit Ibsen's "Ghosts" and "Nora" to the judgment of these voters? Or would he restrict this censorship to the theatres of the lower class only? If so, why are not the patrons of these theatres the best judges of what is moral and decent for them? And would not this discrimination be utterly unjustifiable and tyrannical? If the music halls are decent, it is doubtless on account of the council's power over them, but I do not regard such interference as wise or legitimate or necessary. I never questioned the *power* of the Philistines, but I do question their right to exercise it in this invasive way. The notion that patrons of theatres should be protected from indecency by those who do not go to see the indecent plays is itself so Philistine in its nature that I can hardly believe that Mr. Shaw intends his words in their obvious sense.

We come now to what Mr. Shaw characterizes as my "one really heartfelt objection to muincipal theatres,"—the objection, namely, that consistency would compel the application of the same remedy to many other supposed evils. This, Mr. Shaw says, is an irrational objection, due to my failure to take the world really instead of logically. What I call consistency and logic, he tells me, is nothing but irrational association of ideas, and Fabians are equal to any number of inconsistencies of the kind I pointed out. Now, this requires a great deal of elaboration, and I regret that Mr. Shaw has been so parsimonious of argument. The matter-of-fact statement that the Fabian society has expressly placed to its proposal for the collectivist administration of capital the commonsense limit of social convenience I am, of course, bound to accept, although there seems to be no way of finding out what that limit is. If I understand Mr. Shaw, the Fabian doctrine is this: so far as it is socially convenient, it is necessary to abolish private enterprise and competition, and place the means of production in the hands of the collectivity. The majority, the respectable voters, are, of course, to be the ultimate court of appeal, and whatever they decide to be convenient will be done. But I am afraid that this elastic doctrine does not altogether escape the trammels of logic and consistency. The question is not what this or that Fabian is inclined to do or refrain from doing, but what his general proposition fairly implies. For instance, if Mr. Shaw should lay down the proposition that "*all* economic rent must be appropriated by the State," it certainly would not be mere irrational association for me to say, remembering the "all," that the profits accruing from a newspaper must be logically confiscated along with those accruing from a corner drugstore. Again, if Mr. Shaw should say that "*all* means of production must be owned and controlled by the State," it would not be irrational for me to remind him that a sewing machine, being a means of production, comes within the "all." Mr. Shaw can escape only by dropping the all and declaring that certain means of production, or certain unearned increments, should be handed over to the State. When he does that, logic and consistency will debar *me* from forcing the sewing machine on his attention, because I shall be expected to perceive the qualifying and guarded "certain."

When Mr. Shaw says that municipalities must rescue the stage from commercialism, I am entitled to ask him why he does not propose to rescue also the book and newspaper publication business from commercialism. He cannot say: "I don't because I don't," for common sense would at once write him down an illogical and inconsistent reformer. If I show that the same evils which he proposes to cure in a certain way exist also in certain other spheres, and that the same remedy is needful from his point of view,—Mr. Shaw cannot avoid the force of my reasoning by declining to consider it. Mr. Shaw's revolt against logic and consistency is a revolt against the necessity of correspondence between premises and conclusion.

Mr. Shaw realizes, of course, that it is pure caricature for him to say that I regard it as an inconsistency for a Socialist to excavate his egg with his own spoon after having the foundations of his house excavated with a municipal steam navvy. Were I to make such an averment, the proper response on Mr. Shaw's part would be, not that he declines to be logical and consistent, but that I am extremely illogical in making demands that do not follow from his premises.

This question of logic and consistency, however, has nothing to do with the question whether liberty is or is not a panacea, a master-key for the million locks. The latter is simply a question of fact. Here Mr. Shaw himself is guilty of the *a priori* reasoning which he deems so vicious. It is he who tells me that there is no such thing as a panacea, without proffering proof. I simply and calmly insist that, in a certain sense, liberty *is* a panacea, or, rather, as I prefer to put it, a condition, essential and precedent, to normal and rational progress. Apart from all *a priori* reasons, I offer to prove that, in any given case, liberty works better than regulation, provided that we take into account indirect as well as direct effects. In the particular case of municipal theatres, I have not contented myself with arguing that the proposal is in contravention of the principle of liberty, but have endeavored to show that the very interests Mr. Shaw wishes to promote would suffer grievously at the hands of the new patrons. Still, I willingly admit that I should not favor municipal theatres even if I were convinced that dramatic progress would be furthered by them, because man does not

live by the drama alone, and the tendency and indirect effects of municipal theatres could not fail to be reactionary and fatal to general progress. And this is no mere irrational association of ideas, but an induction from the facts of legislative and governmental history.

But the masses do not want your liberty! says Mr. Shaw, and you are their oppressor rather than champion. This is too sweeping. They certainly want prosperity, comfort, and happiness, and, in trying to show them that liberty is the mother of these things, we are giving them exactly what they want. As for the assertion that many have now more liberty and opportunity for happiness than we are able to use, I do not, unfortunately, find myself among these rare mortals. There are a number of freedoms and opportunities I am obliged to go without and yet crave. I do many things which I would rather leave undone, and I abstain from doing many things which I should much like to do. Mr. Shaw is altruistic; he is happier to-day than he would be under Socialism, and it is entirely for the sake of others that he advocates a change. Although a good deal of an altruist, I do not claim to have reached Mr. Shaw's altitude. Liberty, I feel, would be a benefit not only to the masses, but to me individually. But how can I get rid of this selfishness, when liberty insists on making me happy along with the rest? V. Y.

While sympathizing in no small measure with the Labor Exchange movement, I cannot take the highly favorable view of it that Mr. Byington does, in another column. I will give my reason briefly at a later date. Mr. Byington, whose Single-Tax training makes him look to land reform as the sole source of economic good, is interested in money reform only as a political measure, a means of weakening government. I, to whom money reform is not only this, but an economic reform of the *first* importance as well, am naturally a little more cautious than he as to the economic soundness of any specific financial measure presented for my approval.

The Washington "Post," a truly independent paper which one can read with pleasure in this campaign of mendacity and pharisaism and hypocrisy (on the gold-bug side), had a long editorial on Dana's admirable defence of Proudhon and Anarchism, and wound up with what poor Dana must regard as the "most unkindest cut of all." Here is its language: "Of course we all know by this time that Mr. Dana has changed his language since 1847, but has he ever told us that he has changed his views? Then he was eagerly and eloquently defending an avowed Anarchist, expounding the beneficent features of Proudhon's scheme, and explaining the impossibility of popular progress and advancement under the *régime* of Wall street. To-day he is consigning to perdition all who rebel against the established order of things—established by Wall street—and proclaiming that honor and patriotism and decency are not to be found among them. Which is the real Dana? Which of these two attitudes represents his conscience and his judgment,—the inner heart and purpose of the man?" But Dana can blame no one but himself for this cruel intimation that he still may be an Anarchist at heart. He never announced his change of opinion, and never gave any reasons for his desertion of the cause of labor and liberty. But I must protest against the gratuitous assumption of the "Post" that the old reprobate and marplot has a heart. His judgment may still be sound, but of good feeling there cannot be a trace left in him. He may know that he lies about the movements and people he persecutes with such venom, but he cannot be sorry that he lies.

The Boston "Herald" thinks that "it is rather unfair to bring up the enthusiasm of Mr. Charles A. Dana's youth against him to prove that he was at that time inclined to favor Anarchism, as is done in a pamphlet recently published." And it goes on to say: "It is nearer fifty than forty years ago since Mr. Dana wrote in that way. He probably looks with much amusement himself upon the queer views that then found judgment in his active brain in the pursuit of early ideals. We hardly think Mr. Dana prides himself upon consistency even in his later life. It is not such a great while ago that he was advocating the election of Gen. B. F. Butler to the presidency, when Gen. Butler's ideas upon the currency were very different from those Mr. Dana now supports." It is true that Dana does not and cannot pride himself upon consistency, but it is not the charge of inconsistency that the Proudhon pamphlet raises against him. The charge is that he is a conscious and deliberate liar, slanderer, and defamer. He brands every one who holds the views which he so ably expressed in his youth as traitors, criminals, and rioters. He knows that *he* was honest and sincere in his youth, and he therefore must know that the people who adhere to what he has forsaken and repudiated are neither rascals or fools. If he were an honest man, he would admit that he entertained radical ideas in his youth, and reason with those who entertain such ideas to-day. He would attempt to convince them that they are wrong; he would tell them how and why his own views have undergone a change; and he would cheerfully testify to the earnestness and nobility of the reformers who arraign modern society precisely as he arraigned it in his early days. It is because he exhibits the malice and venom of the conscious renegade and traitor that I hold him up to the odium and scorn of all fair-minded men.

Read the "Sun" every day, Dana tells a correspondent, and you will understand the issues of the campaign and have a correct, true, and intelligent view of them. It is a pity that Dana fails to recommend also a careful reading of his Proudhon articles. Certainly those who read the "Sun" *and* the pamphlet will have a correct understanding, if not of the issues of the campaign in a technical sense, then at least of the spirit and general attitude of the opposing sides.

The Labor Exchange.

I find that some of Liberty's readers are interested in the Labor Exchange, and want to know more about it. It seems to me that the relation of this movement to Liberty's principles is such that it ought to be of great interest to all Liberty's readers; and, as Liberty has hitherto printed only a slight notice of it, a rather fuller statement will be well worth the space it occupies.

The Single-Tax movement appears to be the most conspicuous economic product of the panic of 1873; for, though Henry George's first land pamphlet was published in 1871, it is evident that "Progress and Poverty" was inspired by the panic, the thought of which dominates the whole course of its argument. Just so the Labor Exchange movement is the most notable result of the panic of 1894; the Labor Exchange Association was incorporated in 1891, I believe, but it was the hard times that brought it forward into the public eye. But there is this difference between the two,—that the Single Tax did not get itself prominently before the people till several years after the panic, while the Labor Exchange began to boom almost as soon as the panic was on, is still booming, and nobody knows when it will stop.

The central idea of the new institution, as it practically sets to work, may be thus expressed. Given a number of laborers who have strength and opportunities for producing wealth, especially, if possible, such articles as are in local demand, but who are hampered by the impossibility of finding anybody with money to hire them or buy their goods. Problem, to employ these men without money. Solution: a branch of the Labor Exchange is organized, a place selected as a depository, and the most competent member put in charge as manager. Then whatever each man makes is deposited with the Exchange, and paid for at regular wholesale prices in "deposit checks." These checks are receivable, at the Exchange branch which issued them, in payment at retail prices for anything the Exchange has on hand. Out of the profits the manager is paid; if there is any surplus profit, the benefits go to the members in proportion to the amount of their deposits and the time they are left on deposit.

The Exchange often establishes a factory and hires its members as employees, paying them in its checks. The labor products received as deposits need not by any means be freshly produced, or produced by the depositor; anything that a man owns and wants to sell will be received at the Exchange, if the manager thinks it worth having in stock. Thus, before manufacturing is begun, the capital necessary for a start may be (and often is) received as a deposit and paid for in checks. Deposits are received only from members, but a non-member can easily deposit through a member; the only difference is that the benefit of the deposit, in case of surplus profit, goes to the member in whose name it stood. But goods are sold to non-members direct. Where a successful branch of the Exchange is established, its checks are ordinarily received at par by the retail stores of the neighborhood. According to the "New Charter" of June 12, quoting from the Tacoma "Sun," they are at a premium of 7½ per cent. above United States money in Buckley, Wash. Early in 1894 it was reported that they were 10 per cent. above gold in Chattanooga.

The Labor Exchange is the avowed and vociferous enemy of the legal-tender system. The sole condition of membership, besides the nominal fee of $1.00, is that the member shall bind himself never to demand legal tender from the Exchange. Every "balance check" (used to make change) has on the back a startling picture of a railroad train stopped at the sign "Stop Progress—Legal Tender Toll Gate" and Labor Exchange workmen removing the obstruction. All the literature of the Exchange is full of the continual cry that the legal-tender system is the source of all our economic evils, and to do away with it is our only hope of salvation. Now, this is very comforting when we remember the character of most recent financial talk in labor circles. The branches can at discretion sell or buy goods for legal-tender money, but this is regarded as barter rather than sale, the Exchange's only cash being its own checks. So, too, branches may give money for their checks, as they would give other commodities, if they have spare money that they want to dispose of.

The checks of one branch are generally received at another branch by courtesy, but is is recognized that, as the Exchange spreads, it will become impossible to do this, except for near neighbors. Southern California, where the Exchange is strongest, begins to feel the need of a more complete provision for exchanges between branches, and to discuss how such provision can best be made. Some branches refuse to take any

checks, except those printed from the uniform plates of the Central Office.

G. B. DeBernardi, the originator and president of the Labor Exchange, keeps the Central Office at Independence, Mo. His book, "Trials and Triumph of Labor" (paper, 298 pp., 50 c.) is the recognized "text book" of the movement. Most of the book is occupied with a fictitious history of the United States and a general attack on the current financial system, not better from a literary standpoint than the stupid average of such writings, though containing some strong passages. The part of the book that is really valuable is Part III., entitled "The Labor Exchange," occupying sixty pages, or about a fifth of the book. This contains the description of the organization, with all that is really good of argument in its favor and illustration of its expected working. I wish this part might be reprinted at a low price separate from the rest of the book. De Bernardi's paper, "Labor Exchange Monthly Publications" (25 c. a year), gives less news than other prominent Labor Exchange papers, but discussion of fair quality.

The general organizer, E. Z. Ernst, Olathe, Kan., is a pushing man for business, but has no head for discussion. His paper, "Progressive Thought and Dawn of Equity" (monthly, 25 c. a year), is the very worst-written reform paper I know, except that it has pretty good news columns; his booklets are as bad; and the way he reiterates the cry, "Don't read any literature of other reform besides the L. E.; it is only wasting your time and money; we have studied them all, and know that they are all worthless, and that we have the only true remedy; we can assure you of that, and there is no use in wasting your energies by going over it now for yourselves; don't read the literature of any other reform, and tell your neighbors not to read it,"—well, my command of English gives out when I think of characterizing such stuff. I have not caricatured or exaggerated the way he talks on this subject. He does, however, furnish excellent tracts.

Since the greatest development of the Labor Exchange is in California, and the California experience of to-day touches subjects that are still in the future for other regions, it is not surprising that the California organ, the "New Charter," San Jose (weekly, 50 c. a year, 10 c. for three months), is far the best and fullest of Labor Exchange publications. It prints the largest amount and best quality of both news and discussion, not only from California sources, but from elsewhere, including good and frequent letters from De Bernardi. The best advice I can give to any one who wishes to understand the movement is to send a dollar bill to the "New Charter" office for a copy of "Trials and Triumph of Labor" and a year's subscription to the paper. He will lack very little that is worth having.

The Exchange is strong all along the Pacific coast, aub the "Utopian," Ellensburg, Wash., claims to be "the official organ in the northwest." It contains excellent matter, but is abominably printed.

Northern Ohio has an active group of branches, of which the most important is at Erie, Pa. The Ashtatabula, O., branch wrote to the national treasury to ask about the State bank tax, and received the reply: "If these obligations are not redeemable in money (as from their face appears to be the fact), by the decision of the supreme court of the United States they are not such notes as are subject of taxation under the internal revenue law." By this it would seem possible, so far as national law is concerned, to run almost any kind of bank so long as it let legal tender alone and made commodities its basis.

Some speak of the Labor Exchange as being practically identical with the Mutual Bank. I cannot see that this is so, but certainly the two seek to meet the same need by closely-related methods. The two most important principles, to disregard government in the issuing of currency and to monetize all wealth, are common to both. There cannot in reason be any antagonism between them, and one may well lead the way to the other. It seems to me that the Mutual Bank would have some advantage in convenience and economy, but that the Labor Exchange would have the advantage in simplicity and in being less liable to get into serious trouble by bad management. The Labor Exchange has also at the present moment the advantage of being less revolutionary in appearance and of being already in successful operation. Of course I wish all possible success to the attempts that are being made to establish mutual banks, but a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; and the fact that the Labor Exchange is already an established success gives its organizers a tremendous advantage in gathering members.

It seems to me that no commercial institution now in operation is doing so much to break the power of government as the Labor Exchange. At a time when working people seem bound to argue: "The money question is the most important thing; government alone can furnish money; therefore our only hope is in government," here comes a movement which makes them see that legal tender is their enemy; that they can furnish themselves with money without government help; that they get quicker, surer, and better relief by taking the matter in hand themselves, and not waiting for legislation. It does not only talk to them along these lines; it sets them to doing the things for themselves, and convinces them by their own experience. This is the real propaganda by deed.

Any one who can interest his neighbors in the Labor Exchange will serve the cause of Anarchism well. Any one who can get a branch of the Exchange organized will thereby do more for Anarchism in general, and monetary Anarchism in particular, than he will probably have the chance to do again at a single stroke in a year. Such at least is the mind of

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Feudalism and Anarchy.

To the Editor of Liberty:

I am obliged to Mr. Salter for his historic instances of the unsatisfactoriness of voluntary defensive association, but I must say that he represents things as different from what I supposed them to be. Indeed, his authorities must be rather surprising to each other, since within sixteen lines one of them quotes ancient Greece as an example on one side of the account, and another as on the other. But possibly they may refer to different stages of Greek history.

Yet I do not know what stage of history can be referred to in the statement that "the great men of Greek antiquity, and of almost every other antiquity, were professed brigands," whose protection was obtained by voluntary contract. Of course I understand that all government is brigandage, but I didn't suppose that Mr. Salter understood it so; neither will that help us to understand how Agamemnon, Agesilaus, Alexander, or Sennacherib stood in a relation of voluntary contract to his subjects. Each of these plunderers had a home domain within which everybody was as strictly bound to obey him as in any modern government; and, if each of them, taking his home domain as a base, went out from that to plunder wherever he could, it yet seems to me that common usage is right in speaking of that as an incident of government rather than as brigandage distinguishable from government. So, too, when the general or viceroy of an established government (David at Ziklag, Hannibal, Sherman) makes his governmental authority the basis of a plundering expedition, it is considered a governmental action. Even Sertorius is not a case in point, for he, like Maximo Gomez, was trying to set up a regular government, and succeeding at least in part. Cases like those of Jephthah, David after leaving Saul and before going to Ziklag, or Xenophon during the retreat of the Ten Thousand, are too rare and short-lived to be called on to support so broad a generalization.

But, even if we give the term the loosest possible application; if we regard the Italian tribes joining Hannibal, for instance, as a case of voluntary contract for a brigand's protection because of a lack of governmental protection,—which I am [illegible] wild enough,—it remains true that even this [illegible]ceptional and not the ordinary thing. There [illegible] positively cannot tell to what the quoted statement refers.

Next, and as the chief point, we have feudal Europe. The nature of feudalism, according to Mr. Salter, was that every man must either protect himself or bargain with another to protect him, and the practical result was that, driven by circumstances, but acting voluntarily so far as human relations were concerned, the weak enslaved themselves to the strong for the sake of protection; afterward government was established to get relief from this condition.

But it is simply not true that in the formation of feudal society every man submitted himself to a lord. Many preferred to associate themselves on equal terms with their equals, and thus were formed the "free cities" of the middle ages, and the Swiss cantons. These local associations united in confederacies like the Hanseatic League, the Swiss Confederacy, and the Dutch Republic; and, thus united, they were able to deal as equals with the monarchical and aristocratic powers of their time. In Holland, Switzerland, and England the equal association thus established has been maintained to our day, without ups and downs to be sure, but without breach of continuity, and with final redress of all serious setbacks. From these countries, especially England, it has come down to their descendants in all continents; and all the freest and most hopeful popular government of the world to-day is thus the mere survival of the popular governments which found their opportunity to be born in feudalism's limited freedom of voluntary association.

Perhaps it will not at first be clear how I trace this in England; but, if you will look up the recognized landmarks of the progress of English liberty, you will find that each time the scale was turned by London and other cities rising in defence of their traditional liberties, inherited from the days so abhorrent in Mr. Salter.

But more important than this is the fact which Mr. Salter overlooks as being too notorious for his notice,—that feudalism was a system of government. The germ of feudalism lay in associations voluntarily begun and voluntarily continued; granted. And this was not oppressive, because it was not government. But the process of infeudation was completed under the pressure of laws which commanded every man to take a lord; and soon the laws went on to forbid any vassal to leave his lord. If this produced bad results, do not blame voluntary association for them.

Even before the general prevalence of such laws, I think that, where the vassal acknowledged himself permanently bound to his lord, it was more often from brow-beating than voluntarily. But, even when it was done voluntarily, it was none the less the establishment of a governmental relation. When a man comes irrevocably under an authority, that is government, no matter how voluntarily he may have put himself under this government. The fact that he cannot pull his head out of the stanchion again at pleasure is the test. And whatever oppression may result is an oppression of government.

Doubtless these people did the best they knew how. But their knowing no better than to establish government is no proof that there was nothing better to know. If they had recognized the danger in the first sprouting of arbitrary power, and had resolutely defended their liberties when oppression was still weak, would it not have been better for them? Mr. Salter will say yes when he is talking of democratic liberties; what basis has he for saying no as to Anarchistic liberties?

Again, Mr. Salter talks as if feudalism began in the absence of government. But we know that it began under a government,—though a weak one, which feudalism itself afterward replaced,—and that it took the institutions of this government as a basis for the establishment of its powers. So government is not clear of fault here either.

He adds a reference to the Bushmen, but I do not quite know what it is to do for his argument, for it does not appear from his statement that anybody is getting any protection. The apparent inference, taking [illegible] facts as alleged, is simply that Bushmen do not kn[illegible]ow to combine for protection against crime.

Mr. Salter's facts were to have shown that experience proved voluntaryism to be unsatisfactory in the protection of life and property. I claim to have shown, first, that in the cases referred to voluntaryism was very incomplete; second, that all the best liberty now enjoyed in the civilized world is the direct product of this limited and temporary practice of voluntaryism; third, that, where evil flowed from it, this evil was obviously caused by the abandonment of the voluntary principle.

I wish Mr. Salter could persuade our government to adopt his principle of relieving from taxation all who feel that it would be a sin for them to pay taxes.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Comme Il Faut.

"For God and the king; for country and flag!"
But fainter than ever the parrot tongues wag,
And methinks I detect, as I lean forward and near,
That an oath is ejected along with the cheer.

The rebellion of hell has extended to earth,
And God is expiring with Liberty's birth;
They are asking each other,—these children of men,—
"What's the good of this God? Whence came he, and when?

"In his name our taxes we pay to the king;
In his name our statesmen and priests have their fling;
In his name our backs are eternally bare;
In his name they have left us to feed upon air.

"In his name they tell us to work hard and long,
To be humbly content with the dole of a song,
While, with platitudes thicker than peas in a pod,
We are robbed without let in the name of this God.

"This mythical Godhead,—behind it is seen
The tinsel and show of a king or a queen,
Who, to hide their misdeeds, assert the proud claim,
They are regents of God, and they rule in his name.

"And no one can say who that gentleman is;
No chance is afforded their actions to quiz;
So our taxes they squander; they pose and parade;
While trumps, they are *diamonds*,—never *a spade!*

"And then there's 'Our country,' another fool's cap,
Which helps to insure to the drones a soft snap;
A river flows here, or a mountain divides,
Intervenes a broad ocean, or a fortress derides.

"Some damned thing or other, it is found, grimly stands
Preventing near neighbors from inlocking hands,
While 'God and the king and our country' incite
These natural friends to unnatural fight.

"Their blood and their faces resemble each other;
So, in order that mankind may slaughter his brother,
They weave different flags; and each, for his bunting,
Forgetteth the man, and, like a tiger, goes hunting."

Their rulers, they smile as they multiply taxes,
And fatter and fatter the bondholder waxes;
While life is, to them, a perpetual jag,
Their dupes have the honor to die for the flag.

No country for me! No flag but the sky!
No God and no king, but sweet Liberty!
Let them all go to blazes; my heart and my hand
Are for man, my poor brother, whate'er clime or land.

To those who might think that I live in content
Where the populace choose their own president,
I would say that the masses are robbed just the same;
This difference only,—they shoulder the blame.

Where voting prevails, the rascal and fool
Will outvote the wise man; the rascal will rule.
Then follows corruption and the evils that spring
Just as thick from "the people" as from "God and the king."

From bullets and ballots, from tax and police,
We ask an unqualified, speedy release.
A law that imposes a will, we reject,
While we bow to a law that expresses a fact.

No country for me! No flag but the sky!
No God and no king, but sweet Liberty!
Let them all go to blazes; my heart and my hand
Are for man, my poor brother, whate'er clime or land.

Wm. A. Whittick.

The (Alleged) Money Famine.

To the Editor of Liberty:

It is a great pity that Mr. Badcock's useful exposition of the actual limitations imposed by British law upon the negotiability of loans, and other modes of contract in terms of money, as well as the prohibition of hirings in terms of commodities or rights other than State-made coins, should be marred by an exaggerated view of the evils resulting from these interferences with liberty, and should, in consequence, fail so utterly to point out the nature of the actual evils they produce, or to indicate the true character of the benefits which would result from the complete and final abandonment of these modes of tyranny.

There is no perceptible money famine at this moment. If money were either ten times as valuable or ten times as cheap as it now is, there would in either case be no serious alteration in the sufficiency of the circulating medium for the purpose of exchange. Probably (though here, as elsewhere, dogmatic prophesy is risky) there would be much less inconvenience experienced from a currency ten times as portable than from one ten times as divisible as that now employed. Mr. Badcock utterly fails in his complacent demolition of the argument that there is a wide range of deviation from the existent quantity of money throughout which any particular volume taken at random would answer almost equally well, supposing it to have, and to be known to have, a good degree of permanence. Mr. Badcock fancies this "don't-matter theory" can be overthrown by pushing "the argument home to its resting-place," as if there were but one extreme to be considered. If it were true, he imagines, it ought to "make no difference to any one if the total volume of money be reduced to a threepenny bit, and this locked up in a museum!" But Mr. Badcock and those who regard it as desirable that the volume of money should be considerably and permanently increased forget that, upon their own hypothesis, if pushed to its final consequences, it ought to make no matter if money were as cheap as ashes, which can frequently be obtained for a negative payment, as one can see at factory gates the legend: "Sixpence per load given with ashes." Mr. Badcock just here is like an adviser who wishes to raise the temperature of our climate, while another argues that it would not matter greatly if it were permanently considerably raised or lowered, if only sudden and frequent fluctuations could be avoided. Mr. Badcock might consistently argue: "But surely you will admit that a return of the glacial epoch would be fatal to most forms of life," forgetting that it would be equally fatal to revert to a terrestrial surface heat exceeding that of boiling water.

If money were ten times as valuable as now, only those people would carry sovereigns who now carry ten-pound notes, and purses would be heavily laden with silver. In wholesale and international transactions the increased potency of money would effect a saving of costs of transport, enumeration. Conversely, if money were ten times as cheap as at present, the sovereign would have the potency only of the florin, and those who desired to carry three or four pounds' worth of change would again be overladen. Larger gold coins would be introduced, and some saving in proportionate wear and tear would doubtless be observed.

Stated in more general terms, the solution of the case is that, within fairly wide limits, the reciprocal gains from divisibility and portability nearly balance one another. It is, however, unquestionable that at great distances on either side of some unascertained volume the loss, either of divisibility or portability, is conspicuously in excess of the gain from the increase of the other.

This analysis of the question of the volume of money ought to be recognized as a fundamental position. There are unquestionably no other factors in the problem than the compensations of divisibility and portability.

The economic changes which the removals of the *very trivial* restrictions upon liberty embodied in the bank acts, the coinage acts, and the truck acts would cause never could be conspicuous.

There are great evils in the restrictions imposed by these acts, but they are wholly of the nature common to all those which remove from the sphere of individual and privately-united action the remedy of evils with which they are fitted to deal.

The toleration of trucking in wages, of the issue of coins or tokens by all who could induce the public to pass them, and of borrowings by banks or other traders by means of notes of all amounts payable to bearer on demand, *would lead to serious evils*. The compensations which freedom would bring would undoubtedly *outweigh the evils*. It is highly improbable that the compensation would come in the form of a considerable expansion of the currency. As for the expectation that it would terminate interest, profits, and rents, it is positively puerile.

Under complete monetary freedom the delusion that debts are money would vanish.

The benefits to be expected lie in the direction of increased activity, competition, and *stability* of bankers, money-lenders, and borrowers.

J. Greevz Fisher.

Chapel Allerton, July 31, 1896.

In Reply to the Foregoing.

One can but wonder at Mr. Fisher's lack of power to conceive of media of exchange and standards of value *separately*, as two distinct classes of things. He thinks, or at least writes, of them only as indissolubly bound together, like the late Siamese twins. It is as well to recollect that Mr. Fisher's creed, summed up in his own words, is: "There is truly only one money, and that is gold. The price of gold is gold. Gold and money are not merely at par. They are identical and homogeneous." ("Liberty Review," 1895.) From this position one can understand how Mr. Fisher speaks of the "delusion that debts are money," a position that takes all bank notes, checks, and bills of exchange out of the category of money, even those promising to pay gold.

Mr. Fisher's assertion that, "if money were ten times as valuable or ten times as cheap as it now is, there would be no serious alteration in the sufficiency of the circulating medium for exchange purposes," refers, I suppose, to existing monies, or to monies of absolute gold purity, for his terms "valuable" and "cheap" are shown by the context to have reference *only* to appreciation and depreciation of the standard commodity itself. But, as I have not argued that cheap gold or cheap any other standard is a radical cure for existing disorders, I won't trouble to controvert the assertion in question.

Mr. Fisher's attempt to turn my logic against me is a still-born failure. He asserts that, upon my "own hypothesis, if pushed to its final consequences, it ought to make no matter if money were as cheap as ashes." This assertion is subject to the same criticism as the other. Besides, the question before us was one of *volume*, which Mr. Fisher recognized at the beginning of his sentence and then suddenly turned it into a question of *price!* Moreover, it was not my "own hypothesis" that it didn't matter what the volume (or price, if he likes) of money was. That's the theory of the restrictors to excuse their restrictions. On the other hand, it is safe to say, and so I say it, that it cannot be to the detriment of the industrial world, if the market is flooded with good bills of exchange, bank notes, or other media backed by ample security. With commercial paper on good houses, under free banking conditions, the only effect of *abundance* upon it would be in the lowering of the interest or commission chargeable to those who wanted money.

To-day banking credits are dependent upon a specie reserve to an extent, and so are affected in volume and value by the volume and value of the standard, which they affect in return. But the issue of bank notes, tokens, or other forms of credit *directly* against, *e. g.*, such securities as bankers now *lend* their specie and credit against could not vary in value, or affect the value of the standard, through variations in their volume; nor could their volume be limited by the standard-commodity market being rigged or cornered, where the issuing bankers do not undertake to convert into the standard on demand. I could not say that rigging of the standard-commodity would not disturb valuations in general; but those operations do not now prevent our valuing property to many times the extent of the stocks of the commodity-measure of value, nor should it prevent our issuing certificates of value upon all that property,—to be used, if need be, for sale purposes or exchange purposes.

The ideal notes I anticipate will be related to their standard of value in this way: their demand must have a market, so as to be easily referred to, and securities realized therein, if need be, in the event of banker's customers failing to redeem their pledged property (such realization in standard-value to be held in lieu of the property sold for ultimate payment of the notes out against such property). This contingency is a small matter, not likely to disturb the standard-commodity market, and no more of a risk than all traders run who have to hold stocks. I mention it here, as elucidating the way in which unprivileged bankers will probably have to keep in touch with the commodity they value their securities and notes by.

Bank notes and tokens, isued in aforesaid manner, would form a circulating medium which would give to retailers and consumers generally advantages of a kind comparable to those now enjoyed by wholesale traders and the well-to-do classes by means of their checks,—but far cheaper than check systems at present are, owing to their independence of gold balances and therefore of interest.

Facilities for paying wages stimulate retail sales and consumption, re-act upon all trade, and increase the demand for labor.

Whatever fall from a privileged position the freeing of the vaulted stocks of bullion for non-monetary uses may bring about will be accepted, *not* as a cheapening of money, but as a fall in the price of bullion,—a fall inevitable, which will put gold and silver on straight terms with commodities in general. No alteration, up or down, is desired in a standard value by those who want a standard *for use as a standard*, however difficult or impossible it may be to obtain an approximately invariable standard.

John Badcock, Jr.

The Colonization Folly.

Liberty does not always agree with Mr. J. Greevz Fisher, but is heartily with him in his attitude toward libertarian colonies, as explained in a letter to "Free Life," from which the following is taken:

> It is heart breaking to have to oppose a scheme sponsored by such hearty lovers of liberty as Mr. Sydney Bond and "Egoist," but, if truth must be told, it is that nothing but disaster and obloquy is to be anticipated from any attempt to form and found a community upon the basis of grouping a number of Voluntaryists together in one locality, either in the limits of the United Kingdom or anywhere else upon the face of the habitable earth. The chances of failure would be enormously high, while the good possible in such advocacy of principle would be very low. The structure and administration of such a group, even if a company of the most wise and just people imaginable could be gathered, would subject the principles of Voluntaryism to a premature strain, for which no mortals are as yet prepared. The collated history of all known instances of such colonies, societies, or groups spells ruin either to the company or to the foundation of principles upon which it was designed.
>
> Such a colony, in order to take the initial steps in its formation, must be either a commercial partnership, or a territorial government, or a nondescript compound of both. A trading company is in every way handicapped, if, in addition to being founded to produce material wealth for its component members, it is required to promulgate and advocate certain political, social, or intellectual theories. When, in further addition to the illustration of speculative opinions, it has to embrace all the ramifications of vital activity in close residential proximity, there can be little doubt of the result. If people want to form a bank or start a railway, it is indispensable that they should collect those endowed with the due faculties for the particular operation in view, and sufficiently uncontaminated with predatory, fraudulent, or anti-social tendencies. A successful company will undertake to supply an existing want in its vicinity; its members must be united for a definite and closely-limited purpose,—not one diffused, general, and vague. They must know what they aim at, and must be fairly well agreed as to the methods of hitting the mark. Thus, for example, a Voluntaryist school or college might (when or if Voluntaryists were very numerous) be feasible, as, for instance, Methodist colleges exist. Even a life insurance scheme, such as the Quaker "Friends' Provident," might hang together. But what greater prospect of success would a Voluntaryist colony have than a Baptist colony?
>
> Many, if not most, of the most prominent Voluntaryists would be simply mad to relinquish their present fairly-assured vocations in favor of such a venture; and, if formed of those alone who are at present doing very badly, it would be foredoomed. When Voluntaryists are numerous enough, there are practicable courses open to them calculated to promote their principles to a far greater degree. The day will sometime come, and may not be so far distant, when a strike against all or some taxes may be worth talking about. It might be considered as to whether a free distillery, or a free smuggling port, could not be set up. Till then, the most effective course lies in such propagandist activity as suits the aptitude of each worker and his means.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, Stephen T. Byington, Belvidere, N. J.

☞ For the present the fortnightly supply of targets will be maintained by sending members a special monthly circular, alternating with the issue of Liberty.

Note change in the secretary's address.

So Liberty is to become a monthly. What is to be the effect of this on our Corps? We are at work writing fortnightly letters, and it would certainly be a very great pity to drop back. Therefore Mr. Tucker proposes to print a slip with targets and nothing else, half way between the issues of Liberty, and send it free to members. On behalf of the Corps, I accept with many thanks.

It will now no longer be disputable that Corps members are a little better up to date in matters concerning our movement than any one else. I hope this fact will bring in a few more members. If you are unfortunately to have less of Liberty to read hereafter, you can at least put the time thus saved into writing Corps letters. It is an ill wind that blows no good, and it is a bad sailor that does not get all the good he can out of an uncomfortable squall.

If, by accident or misunderstanding, any member fails to get the slip, I hope to receive his complaint at once. No one who claims to be working with the Corps shall be left out.

During the recent delays in Liberty's publication very few targets have been sent me. Just now, owing to these delays, I could not have used a full supply; but henceforward, under the new arrangement, I shall use as many as usual, and hope to receive plenty.

Comrade Cohen has started an "Anti-Interest League," of which he, at 1,408 Curtis St., Denver, Col., is something—secretary, I believe—practical manager, at any rate. In this capacity he controls the insertion of a certain amount of matter in many labor and Populist papers. Now he wants us to write for him. He says:

> It has these advantages over the haphazard "shot." It will *surely* be printed, not in one, but in fifty papers, and then copied largely. The word Anarchy will not be mentioned. None of the different schools will be attacked as a school; for the rest, all that can be said to strengthen the non-interest crusade will be done; the money question can be discussed in its relation to other parts of the economic reform programme; particular talks on mutual banking will be discouraged, because we are in danger of wearing out that phrase with outsiders. No article must ever run over eight hundred words.

Those who regard the abolition of interest as all-important will find here such an opportunity as they want, while those who are more concerned about the general establishment of freedom may be able to get in a good word for freedom under cover of the interest question. It seems to me that a programme like this is hardly worth so much of Comrade Cohen's time and strength as it is getting; but, as long as he is in it, we may as well take advantage of it to get some of our ideas printed. So I sent him two articles, one of which he accepted and one he rejected (that is what "*surely* be printed" means, you see); but I sent the rejected one to a farmers' paper of large circulation, which printed it very promptly. So my writing was not wasted. I recommend others to go and do likewise.

Target, section A.—The "Echo," Ness, Kan., speaks as follows:

> The Alliance is the one organization that is the best posted on questions of to-day of any body of people in the United States, and it has found that "something better" is the Labor Exchange system, which, once thoroughly established, will do away with money to a large extent. The Alliance people know only too well that under our present system, and until this system is entirely changed, it would only be too easy for bankers, monopolists, trusts, and combines to corner any amount of money issued by the government, large or small, sooner or later. They seem to be aware of the fact that our whole system is an organized effort whereby two-thirds of the people—non-producers—want to, and do, live off the one third,—producers,—and we are going to counteract it by a system which will make it harder for the drones to live off the workers. The time will come when labor will be recognized above capital; that labor is the only true capital, and that every one has that within himself, and, in place of waiting for some one to hire them, laborers have found a way to hire themselves and without the aid of capitalists, and what they produce will be theirs, as by right it ought to be.

The allusion in the first sentence is to the Farmers' Alliance platform at the time of the birth of the People's Party, which called for the "sub-treasury system, or something better." Approve the editor's position; point out more fully the faults of government money and the advantages of voluntary issues.

Section B.—The "New Charter," 169 W. San Fernando St., San Jose, Cal., a "middle-of-the-road" Populist and Labor Exchange organ. The Populist editor is disgusted with the result of the Populist convention, which he regards as a corrupt deal with the enemy. On August 12 he announced the future policy of the paper as follows:

> It will advance from the ground of palliatives to the ground of remedies. Its space will be devoted hereafter to the advocacy of the Labor Exchange and of other remedial measures.

And he explained the collapse of the People's Party management in these words:

> The leaders of every political party, when within smelling distance of the pie-counter, always take what to them seems the shortest route to get there, regardless of principle.

On August 26 he came out editorially for the Socialist Labor Party, though still keeping the Populist national ticket at the head of his columns. The paper is now apparently wavering between the People's Party, the Socialist Labor Party, and the anti-political policy of the Labor Exchange, and prints plenty of letters in all three directions. Send in letters showing that no fundamental relief could be had through politics, even if politics were honest; that, when the S. L. P. leaders get near the "pie-counter" of office, they will presumably be no more consistent than the Populist leaders; and that voluntary combination, as in the Labor Exchange and Mutual Banking, is the true remedy. I hope other friends beside Section B will write to this target, as I think it a specially promising one.

Stephen T. Byington.

A Poem with Notes.

A weapon that comes down as still
As snowflakes fall upon the sod,

[But, like snowflakes, sometimes accompanied by a very noisy display of wind.]

But executes a freeman's will

[That is, free to have some other freeman's will executed on him.]

As lightning does the will of God:

[Count the time from the moment when the voters will to have a law passed to the moment when such a law as they want is passed, and you will get a new idea of the speed of the lightning.]

And from its force nor doors nor locks
Can shield you—

[Amen! this is why we mourn!]

——— 'Tis the ballot-box!

Verses by John Pierpont.
Prose by Stephen T. Byington.

My Will, Not Thine, Be Done.

[Mark Guyau.]

Initiative and audacity are needed. One should rebel against events, instead of bending before them. No one should be content to say: "Let God's will be done." Say, rather, "Let my will be done." Be a rebel amid the passive multitude, a sort of Prometheus or Satan.

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